

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:

Jim Menard, Area Management Biologist
Scott Kent, Assistant Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 443-5167
Fax: (907) 443-5893

Norton Sound Area Office
Pouch 1148
Nome, AK, 99762
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SUBDISTRICTS 4-6 COMMERCIAL SALMON OPENINGS

Norton Bay Subdistrict will reopen to commercial salmon fishing for two 48-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 9 to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 11, and from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 12 to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 14. Commercial periods directed on chum salmon will also be allowed this week in the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts. In Subdistrict 5, the Shaktoolik Subdistrict, there will be one 48-hour period from 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 8 to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 10, and one 24-hour period from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 12 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 13. In Subdistrict 6, the Unalakleet Subdistrict, there will be two 24-hour periods from 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 8 to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 9 and from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 12 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 13. Permit holders in all three subdistricts are limited to 100 fathoms of gillnets with a mesh size no larger than 6 inches.

The commercial catch of chum salmon during the most recent period in Norton Bay Subdistrict was 5,171 chum salmon by 15 permit holders. This was a record high harvest for a single period in the Norton Bay Subdistrict commercial fishery and the total harvest to date of 11,560 chum salmon is on track to possibly exceed the record harvest of 21,973 chum salmon caught during the 1978 season. In Subdistrict 5, the Shaktoolik Subdistrict, permit holders have been stuck on the beach for the most part as a result of hazardous surf conditions from southerly winds. The department is setting a 48-hour opening for this subdistrict to mitigate lost harvest opportunity due to high surf this past week. The department will also consider extending the 24-hour period set for Friday, July 12 if the forecasted westerly winds severely hamper fishing effort during the July 8 48-hour opening. Chum salmon harvest from the most recent 24-hour opening in the Unalakleet Subdistrict was 5,602 chum salmon, which was 139% above the average harvest of 2,342 chum salmon for the first week of July. Incidental harvest of Chinook salmon is 66 fish thus far in the Unalakleet Subdistrict. Unalakleet Subdistrict will remain on the schedule of two 24-hour periods this week while the remainder of the Chinook salmon run moves through the Unalakleet Subdistrict and enters the Unalakleet River drainage. Chum salmon passage at the Unalakleet River weir is nearly 11,000 fish and the Unalakleet River aerial survey goal of 2,400-4,800 chum salmon will easily be reached. In addition, Shaktoolik sonar estimated passage of chum salmon is over 10,000 fish, which indicates that inriver abundance of chum salmon will be sufficient to provide for subsistence uses and escapement needs in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict.

Longer periods directed on chum salmon are possible for Subdistricts 5 and 6 beginning Monday, July 15 after the bulk of the Chinook salmon run has entered the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet River drainages.